

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-22 are pending. Claims 7, 8, 13, 15, 20, and 22 are amended. No claims have been canceled or added.

Objections to Drawings

Figure 3 was objected to because it included reference character 314, which was not mentioned in the specification. The specification has been amended to include reference character 314. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the objection.

Claim objections

Claims 7, 8, 13, 15, 20, and 22 are objected to because the claims fail to specifically define the terms or symbols N and M. Claims 7, 8, 13, 15, 20, and 22 have been amended to define N and M to be integers. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the objection.

Rejections under 35 USC 103(a)

Claims 1, 7, 8-10, 12-14, and 20-22 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,957,412 to Betz et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,452,227 to Kelsey et al. Claims 2-6, 11, and 15-19 are rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Betz in view of Kelsey and further in view of U.S. patent No. 6,848,094 to Andreev.

Applicants note that Betz qualifies as prior art only under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as the '412 patent was filed on November 15, 2002 and issued on October 18, 2005 and the present application has a filing date of July 17, 2003. Moreover, Betz and the present invention were, at the time the present invention was made, subject to an obligation of assignment to a common assignee, Altera Corporation. Hence, Betz is disqualified as prior art under 35 U.S.C. §103(c). As such, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of these rejections and allowance of these claims.

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Reply to Office Action of November 2, 2005

PATENT

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 415-576-0200.

Respectfully submitted,



David B. Raczkowski
Reg. No. 52,145

TOWNSEND and TOWNSEND and CREW LLP
Two Embarcadero Center, Eighth Floor
San Francisco, California 94111-3834
Tel: 415-576-0200
Fax: 415-576-0300
Attachments
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